Testing of Imported wheat

† 3689. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the wheat imported recently from Australian Wheat Board had been tested immediately after the import in India by the Regional Plant Protection and Quarantine Station and the Central Food Technology Research Institute, Mysore;

(b) if so, the reasons for conducting this test and the number of days within which the report of this test was provided; and

(c) the percentage of weeds and pesticides found in the wheat separately in the test?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir, as per extant provisions, wheat samples were collected by the concerned Plant Protection and Quarantine Authorities and the Port Health Officers for testing. One composite sample was tested at the Central Food Technological Research Institute, Mysore to ensure that the residues of pesticides/insecticides in the imported consignment conforms to the specifications laid down under the PFA Act and Rules. The result of the CFTRI, Mysore was made available to the PHO within five days certifying the imported wheat to be conforming to the, prescribed standards.

The samples of wheat are tested by the Regional Plant Protection Quarantine officials on a continuous basis as and when fresh lot of wheat is discharged from the vessel. This test is done for ensuring that the inspected consignment does not carry exotic weeds/pests.

(c) The two shipments of Australian Wheat Board (AWB) wheat which have arrived at Indian ports till date have been inspected and tested as quarantine procedures and guidelines, resulting in detection of a total of 40 quarantine weed seeds of two speices (out of 35,000 MT and 12,000 MT of wheat in the two shipments) which works out to 0.0009% by weight and does not pose significant risk of establishment and hence these two shipments have been released.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

The presence of pesticides in the imported wheat has been found to be within permissible limits.

Compensation to farmers of Punjab

3690. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state how the Government propose to compensate the farmers of Punjab who have sold wheat to Government or private agencies before Government's delayed announcement to pay bonus on wheat over and above the minimum support price of Rs. 650/- per quintal?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): The incentive bonus of Rs. 50 *per* quintal for wheat over Minimum Support Prices (MSP) of Rs. 650 per quintal announced on 22nd April, 2006 is applicable from the start of the Rabi Marketing Season (RMS) 2006-07 i.e. from 20th March, 2006 and upto 30th June, 2006 for the wheat procured by FCI & State Agencies.

Onions as essential Commodities

3691. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Andhra Pradesh has requested the Union Government to re-consider the matter to declare onions as an essential commodity under the provisions of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and also to concur to promulgate a control order to check the prices and availability of stocks on onions;

(b) whether Government have taken any action in this regards;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Government would consider the feasibility to import onions from China and allot it to the Andhra Pradesh at Visakhapatnam Port delivery for release to the consumers at the subsidized rate of Rs. *71*- per kg; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) Yes, Sir.